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SAPC-12313 ✓

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26 January 1957

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Deputy Project Director

**SUBJECT:** Arrangements with NACA and Kelly Johnson  
re Release of U-2 Photographs

1. In a telephone conversation with Walter Bonny on 23 January I agreed that we would tentatively schedule the release of the U-2 photographs for publication on 10 February. This would require that the photographs be put in the mail no later than 5 February, by which time the decision to make the release would be irrevocable. Accordingly I have asked you to make sure that Mr. Bonny is given firm instructions no later than noon on 4 February as to the manner in which he should proceed.

2. Mr. Bonny made the excellent suggestion that Kelly Johnson and Dr. Hugh Dryden might profitably discuss the wisdom of releasing these photographs on the occasion of meetings they will be attending together in New York on 28 and 29 January. I have since, by telephone on 25 January, passed this suggestion on to Kelly who agreed to talk the matter over in New York with Dr. Dryden. I also confirmed to Kelly that one copy of each of the photographs had been mailed to him and promised that we would not finally decide to make the release without further communication with him.

3. Kelly will be in Washington on 30 and 31 January. At his suggestion I asked that a meeting be arranged to include Kelly, Walter Bonny, Colonel Gibbs, and others as appropriate both to show Kelly the photographs (which will not reach Los Angeles until after he has left for New York) and to determine finally what our course of action is to be. I believe all the following matters should be settled at that meeting:

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- a. Whether the photographs are to be released.
- b. If so, the release date and the date of mailing to the press.
- c. By whom they are to be released, and if by more than one source, the timing of the several releases.
- d. What kind of text or texts should accompany the releases.
- e. What procedure is to be followed for final clearance by our Headquarters of the texts.

4. My own tentative views on these matters are:

- a. That we probably have to release the photographs.
- b. That if so we should stick to the tentatively agreed release date.
- c. That the release should be approximately simultaneously by NACA and Lockheed.
- d. That the present NACA text is adequate for its purposes but that Lockheed will probably have to prepare a somewhat fuller release, if only to be ready to answer technical questions. This release might be based largely on the question and answer list prepared last spring. I believe you should arrange for telegraphic submission of the Lockheed text at Headquarters, although Lockheed is probably the best authority on what needs to be and what can safely be said. Copies of photographs and releases should of course be in the hands of the Air Force prior to the release date.

5. I have advised General Cabell that it was probably going to be necessary for us to release photographs of the U-2 and he concurs in this action if we conclude that it is in the best interest of the security of the project. Therefore no further internal policy clearance is necessary. Nevertheless, it is of great importance that General Cabell and

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the Director be warned several days in advance that the photographs are about to be published, so they will not be taken unawares. I believe it is also important that General White and certain other senior officers in the Air Force be similarly advised in advance.

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RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.  
Project Director

RMB:cw

- 1-Dep. Pro. Dir.
- 2-Asst. Pro. SO
- 3-RMB Chrono
- 4-Project Chrono

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